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mour said: "There is no just view of education which does not take into account its diffusive nature. But, it may be said, if all this is true, it is still best to leave higher education to private support. It will always get great aid from that source, but if it depends upon that alone only a class can enjoy it. It would leave a wide gap between the schools for all and the schools for a few. It would shut out many of the best and brightest minds, and their loss would be a public loss. It would break up the unity of our system, its broad scope, and the sympathies which should run through and permeate the whole."

Placing this utterance by Governor Seymour side by side with the well-known views of Thomas Jefferson, one is entitled to say, I think, it is a spurious democracy which objects to the public maintaining schools for the instruction of even the highest order, if general conditions make it desirable.

Seth Low

A REPLY *

To the Editors of the School Review:

A poetical passage cannot be stripped of its poetic form without ceasing to be poetry. In its form resides its essential character. The study of the poet is always for an impressive diction, whereby he may exalt the trite themes of verse and make familiar old truths seem new and beautiful. What Emerson calls the "skyey" sentences of Shakespeare are such wholly by virtue of their poetic form. The ultimate thought-content of a poem may be very slight, while yet the poem is very great. A pure lyric evaporates almost wholly on the removal of its form. Even that poetry which abounds the most in moral or argumentative significance is reduced to homily when its meaning is rendered in prose.

Failure to appreciate the absolute supremacy of form in poetry is what vitiates, most of all shortcomings, the current teaching of literature. The function of the teacher, with regard to poetry, is to bring out the value of the form, rather than to find and state the moral. To read a poem well is more important than to reduce it to paraphrase.

* See the SCHOOL REVIEW for May, 1894, page 303.

Nor is it necessary that the meaning of a poem be at once understood. The time may possibly come, with respect to an obscure passage, when paraphrase may be resorted to for the purpose of elucidation. But usually it will happen that good reading of a piece sufficiently explains its difficulties. At its best, paraphrase of good verse, as practised in school, is parody. A paraphrase is not merely another form of the phrase; it is formless phrase, without beauty, without sweetness, without light. Better than paraphrase is repetition of the poem in its true form. This cannot be improved upon. A poem well dwelt upon grows on the young learner. It will grow upon him still when he has done with it in school. His memories of it should not be paraphrastic memories, but should carry with them the glories of rhythm and figure with which the piece was originally endowed by the poet's art.

Other occasions for writing are quite abundant enough to make it easy to spare this one. Of opportunities for prose of every grade the world is full. We need not resort to poetry for materials of prose. Poetry addresses the imagination directly, not through a medium; and even in the school room it may be trusted to reach its mark.

S. Thurber

A CORRECTION

To the Editors of the School Review:

SIRS—Kindly allow me space in the REVIEW to correct an error of the typesetter in my article on the "Value of Military Training and Discipline in Schools." In the ninth line from the bottom of page 281 "councils of the nation" should read "councils of the nations;" otherwise the sentence is meaningless.

Very respectfully yours,

T. B. Bronson

Lawrenceville, N. J.